

## [Mrs. C. G. Landis]

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Mrs. C. M. Cohea

Amarillo, Texas

Pioneer Women, Experiences

Wordage: 1756

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Potter County

District 16

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Interview with Mrs. C. G. Landis, 1119 Jackson, Mar. 1, 1938.

Mrs. Landis, whose parents pioneered in Belle County, Texas, and the adjacent [?] region, where as a girl she often saw the early settlers in that territory pick up rocks and stones from fields before they could be cultivated and make fences of these same stones, pioneered with her husband in the Texas Panhandle in the early '90's. Mrs. Landis, a native of the "deep South" - Mississippi - had heard many stories of Texas. She pictured the cowboy as an uncouth individual with rough dress and rougher manners. Her idea of a "sweater" was something to wear instead of a free boarder at a line camp or ranch headquarters during the "slack" season. Line riders were a deep mystery until she found it convenient to board several of his their type at her home near the present Jack Hall ranch northwest of Amarillo in the early '90's. Here the lucky line riders had a room in their

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private dugout near the Landis home of pine lumber, where Mrs. Landis learned to know the Panhandle cowboy as he really is, a true [?] knight of the saddle , and where she laid the foundation of a new home and many pleasant and interesting memories of the country and its people.

Mrs. Landis recalls the Christmas of 1892, spent in this frontier home, when the ground was covered several inches deep with snow on the level. Even the line rider board boarder was staying close to his dugout. But a little matter of weather [?] does/ not phase a mother. Mrs. Landis had several small children, and Santa Claus Day was fast approaching. She had to get to town, Amarillo , some way and get something with which to fill those tiny expectant stockings. The line rider told her she could not go in that weather. Her husband added his negative advice. That made the [??] vote unanimous. She decided to make the trip the next morning. 2 The night before the line rider took two big rocks and placed them on the box stove in his dugout to heat all day. That night they did not entirely lose their heat and were easily rewarmed again on the morning of the journey. Rising early, Mrs. Landis prepared the children for the trip to town, for half of the pleasure of the great day lies in "seeing Santa" at the stores, even if they were only two or three little frontier general stores.

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Placing the two older children [?] the bed of the wagon, the heated rocks next them to keep them warm, she covered them snugly with a blanket and took the baby on her lap on the spring seat. A second blanket covered the baby and the laps of her and her husband and protected their nether limbs from the icy draft [??] beneath the raised seat.

Across [?] the uncharted prairie, where the snow had blotted out every familiar landmark and trace of roadway, the Landis family rode those cold miles to the young cow town of Amarillo. Toys and goodies for the children's Christmas [????] purchased at Smith and Walker's or one of the other general stores open at that time. Most of the pioneers stores

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carried general merchandise, drugs, dry goods, groceries, often adding [??] postoffice [?] and bank for good measure. Cold and tired, but happy the little cavalcade reached [??] home late in the evening.

Mr. Landis, being for many years connected with the political and official life of the city, recalls many interesting anecdotes pertaining to court and lawyers. Don Marrs a Kentuckian practicing law in the early days of Amarillo with his office where the Green building now is, brought his mother to visit with him from the home state. Mrs. Marrs, [?] visiting her son at his office one day, found a group of political sages occupying most of the office space - and chairs. One of the group was a pompous old gentleman who always knew everything and everybody - to hear him tell it. Introduced by Marrs to his mother, he boasted, "Why, I know Mrs. Marrs well. Fact is, I was almost your (Don Marrs) father". After the departure of this bombastic old 3 fool, Mrs Marrs remarked with a look of dazed surprise on her face, "Why, I never saw that man before in my life".

At still another time the cosmopolitan gentleman, self-styled, was one of a group of men when one of their number said, facetiously, of a long-bearded old man who had just passed by, "There goes Rip Van Winkle". The know-it-all gentleman spoke up quickly, "Rip-why, I used to know him quite well, very well indeed".

Mrs. Landis, who herself has passed the more than biblically Biblically allotted three score years and ten without a tinge of gray noticeable in her lovely brown hair, tells the following story of her mother, who at 88 still has raven looks. A lady in a group at a quilting bee once aske, enviously - she herself was a great deal younger and quite gray. " Mrs. Green. ( that was her Mrs. Landis mother mother's name ) how do you keep your hair so black?"

Mrs. Green, unblinking, replied tartly, "I just drink black coffee."

Mrs. Landis also relates an amusing incident involving a cosmetics salesman who was urging her to buy a certain lotion that would "keep her looking not a day over thirty". Her son laughed and told the salesman that the joke was on him as his mother was then 46 or

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7. But the enterprising cosmetics seller was really “taken in” by the youthful appearance of his subject. Mrs. Landis at 70 still retains the appearance of a woman of at least 20 years younger.

One of the most exciting experiences which Mrs. Landis recalls as a new comer to the plains happened on a trip, her first, to the scenic Palo Duro Canyon, where many of the early settlers went in the fall to gather wild grapes and plume which made delicious jellies, conserves, and deep dish cobblers. However, Mrs. Landis herself admits, somewhat ruefully, that she never could quite make grape jelly jell.

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One day in October of 1892, when the grapes were at their ripest and best, friends of the Landises in Amarillo who ran a livery stable at the present location of the Grand and Silver five-and-ten store, came out and invited the former to go on a fruit-gathering outing to the Grand Canyon of the Panhandle. The next day the party, starting from the Golither home , where the W. H. Fuqua residence now stands, made the all-day drive to the canyon. School was in session and the Golithers left their children at home, all except / the baby. The Landises had their children with them, the youngest now being the jailer at Amarillo. Mr. and Mrs. Landis took quilts and blankets and the [Golithers?] a mattress an bedding for the two nights which they expected to spend in the Palo Duro, the night of their arrival and the second night after the one day of gathering grapes and plums and enjoying the gorgeous view before returning the second day.

[?????????????? ???????????????]

Driving down the canyon floor for five or six miles, they selected a suitable spot and pitched camp for the night. While the women folks were preparing supper, thunder growled overhead. That night rain came down in torrents. However, the next morning the group went out to find the fruit for which they had made the / long trip. The men cut down trees

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heavily laden with grape vines twisted about their branches and with luscious purple grapes hidden among their [?] leaves.

Stepping across the tiny trickle which was the creek, the women placed the children on a wagon sheet spread upon the sandy "beach" of the Plao Duro Creek. Looking up the canyon, Mrs. Lantos Lantis beheld a sight which was strange to her uninitiated eyes.

Calling to her friend, she said, "What is that great white mass 5 up the gorge . ? I can't make out what it is. It looks like snow, but I never saw anything like it before."

Mrs. Golither, [???] who was better acquainted with the vagaries of the plains than her friend, took one look at the grayish-white wall towering up the canyon and cried, "A headrise! Run for your lives!"

Mrs. Landis recounts those exciting moments:

"We gathered up the young'uns and started for camp across the creek, over which we had stepped but a few minutes before, as fast as we could go, but before we got across the water was swirling about us waist - deep. Mrs. Landis and Mr. Golither hurriedly drove the wagon and team upon a higher level where they thought they would be safe from the flood waters, but soon they had to move the outfit to a still higher ledge. For three days and nights we stayed in the canyon, with food only for [the?] one day and the two nights planned for theouting. We had to wait until the water receded enough so that we could find the back trail to the point where we had entered the canyon, as that was the only way out. There were [?] no roads, only cattle trails, in the Palo Duro at the time."

Headrises are sudden and swift in the deep canyons and ravines [???] of the high plains. A dry arroyo may be a destructive avalanche of water in a mere fraction of time. Had not the floor of the canyon been "spread out" at the point where the outing group was caught, the story might have had a different and tragic ending.